

**SPECIAL MEETING
BUDGET WORKSHOP
May 2, 2012**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on Wednesday, May 2 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Manager's Conference Room, 250 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, CT.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann. Absent: Councilor McAlister.

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk

Chairperson Hemmann called the special meeting to order.

Town Manager Bridges handed out several documents to let the Councilors know the previous questions were being considered and where the budget stands at this point.

Currently, the entire proposed budget is at \$87,704,184. This figure includes the Board of Education budget as previously presented. Manager Bridges stated that there is \$106,000 to cut due to changes in anthem health reducing administration fees etc; another \$100,000 may be removed from the self insurance fund as it can sustain itself; and \$8,000 from miscellaneous accounts on the Town side.

Councilors wanted to be sure that items previously discussed were resolved by the Town Manager for this meeting: increase to Registrars of Voters salaries; tennis court at Webb; firefighters increase by \$1, from \$6 to \$7, per trip for an additional \$12,000 to their budget; also a new fire truck, specs will be ready shortly. There was also discussion on the Board of Education budget and all day kindergarten and amount of savings for teacher retirements and exact cost of all day kindergarten, teachers and the materials required. They asked if Manager Bridges had inquired into the discrepancy in cost of electricity to the fire department when every other department has shown a 3% decrease. He also mentioned that there may be a potential for a regional grant opportunity through CRCOG to share a tree truck. Wethersfield would be in charge and 2 towns, Rocky Hill and Berlin, were both interested in sharing it. He estimated they could recognize income of approximately \$30,000, which could be used as a down payment on the \$165,000. Also they were discussing replacement of Cottone Field in the future. Webb tennis courts have not been usable for several years, teardown and rebuild is approximately \$130,000.

Overall they thought the Board of Education did a good job with their budget. There was some discussion as to running a pilot program for all day kindergarten at only two schools for parents who were interested in having their child attend. One parent in attendance stated she was there to support full day kindergarten. When asked if she would "pay for play" or enrichment for part of the day, she said yes because she could afford it. She has already enrolled her child in a magnet

school lottery and the child is 2 ½ years old. By offering all day kindergarten in Town it would keep the money that follows a child to a magnet school in Wethersfield. As a parent she would save \$1000 a month but would also pay to have her child enrolled in a full day program. She also would not mind larger class sizes in grades 1-3.

Councilors also asked if Finance Director Susan Smith had looked at the effect of a change to minimum wage. Ms. Smith had reviewed and thought that the only department to be affected would be Parks & Recreation but their programs pay for themselves.

There was also discussion on the Library budget and what had already been reduced from their budget and where more monies could be utilized for books and technology. The public address system for the community room was already removed and other monies were identified for it.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:20 p.m., Councilor Manousos moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk
Approved by Vote of Council
June 4, 2012